



Photo — courtesy Salt Lake City Chamber of Commerce
Utah's state flower, the sego lily

upon it. Fastening themselves on the green shoots in our fields, there they cling for a moment, eating, cutting, and grinding. Then clumsily hopping forward, they climb upon the next green shoot and cling there. Their appetites seem never to be satisfied.'

"'Look!' another farmer cried, 'their numbers seem to have no end! As these countless hordes are moving upon our fields past us, millions more are coming from the mountains to take their places.'

"'What can be done? The destruction is terrible!' one moaned.

"'Certainly something has to be done quickly,' another exclaimed, 'or every blade of grain in the valley will be eaten and we will all starve!'

"'You two run back to the settlement and get all of the people to come and help fight this plague,' another one instructed. 'I'll stay here and see what I can do to head off the advance of the crickets.'

"As they ran they called, 'Help! Come and help fight the crickets. Myriads of them have come upon our fields and are eating our crops. Wherever they have gone, they have mowed all the vegetation to the ground, leaving it as if touched by acid or burnt by fire.'

"Soon all the members of the new community were running to the scene of the destruction. Many of them fought the crickets with spades, others used brooms, and still others used sticks. Holes were dug and for the radius of rods the pests were driven into them and buried. Bushels and bushels of them were destroyed in this way. Meanwhile the men plowed ditches around the wheat field and filled them with water. Hundreds of thousands of the black insects were drowned and carried by the running stream from the fields. Fire was tried, but to no better purpose. Day after day passed and the cricket plague

seemed to increase. The pioneers felt helpless to cope with the insects.

"'What's the use?' they moaned. 'The methods we're using seem not to affect the numbers of the pests. As many as ever seem to remain, and millions more are swarming from the mountains each day. When few in numbers, these insects are almost harmless, but they are terrible when they come in millions.'

"One man, in despair, cried, 'What are we to do? Since the days of Egypt's curse of locusts there has probably been nothing like this plague of crickets. The failure to destroy them means famine. Here we are settled in the Salt Lake Valley more than 1,000 miles from our nearest neighbors to the east and 800 miles to the west. It seems to me that we're alone and helpless in this wilderness. If something miraculous doesn't happen, we'll die like rats in the desert.'

"The hearts of the colonists failed them. They looked at each other in helpless despair and said, 'We are beaten, beaten.' Such despair is awful for strong men to admit, especially when beaten by creatures so small," the teacher remarked.

"'Only the Lord can save us from this plague,' the people wailed. And every man, woman, and child bowed to the earth and prayed. As any devout Christians would have done, they asked the God of Israel — the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob — to come to their rescue.

"Meanwhile the ceaseless gnawing of the ruthless invaders went on; and one field after another became brown patches where wheat no longer grew. 'Soon all will be bare, and our hope for food and life will disappear,' they moaned."

Miracle of the sea gulls

"Then the miracle happened," Mr. Madsen explained. "There was heard